

December 1, 2015

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554-0004

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

For years, we have been promised a vision in which technology unleashes TV and delivers consumers more choice, better content and new services that revolutionize the video experience. We've heard complaints from consumers about why they need a set-top box to watch their favorite programming. And we've pressed TV providers and networks to produce and carry the kind of diverse programming that represents all of America and not just the privileged few.

The good news is that it appears that we finally are on the cusp of this new unencumbered television frontier. How do we know? Just listen to leaders like Apple CEO Tim Cook who recently declared "The Future of TV is Apps." Netflix Chief Content Officer Ted Sarandos echoed those sentiments when he said that in 10 years TV, "will be a series of apps that's closer to what you see on smart TV." And when you look at the marketplace, companies like Amazon, Apple, Google and Roku all sell video devices that provide TV programming via apps. The evidence is overwhelming.

That is why we are concerned by reports that the FCC is considering new regulation called All Vid that would jeopardize this progress, raise consumer costs, require consumers to rent another set-top box, threaten diverse programming and erode consumer protections. This would be a disaster for consumers and minority voices.

Instead of allowing innovators and competitors to continue building on the TV app frontier, All Vid would require consumers to add a government-designed set-top box, resulting in higher bills and higher energy usage. And even worse, while requiring consumers to rent more equipment it would eliminate consumer protections concerning privacy, emergency alerts, children's programming and more. Consumers would pay more and be protected less.

All Vid will cause irreparable harm to independent and minority programmers by allowing third parties to strip programming from visible channel placements and relegate it to the bottom of the pile. These merchants would also be allowed to sell intrusive advertising without sharing any revenue with programmers, cutting off the needed revenue to continue producing quality content.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure that consumer welfare and diversity of voices are not the casualties of an unnecessary tech mandate like All Vid.

Sincerely,



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress




Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress


Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress


Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress


Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress


Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress


Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress


Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress


Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress


Corrine Brown
Member of Congress


Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress


Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Gwen S. Moore

Edward Norton

LA-2

Shirley Jackson Lee

Barbara Lee

John Lewis

Ronnie Wakeland

Cheryl

Jim Longers,



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 15, 2016

The Honorable Alma Adams
U.S. House of Representatives
2304 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Adams:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern with issues relating to Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your admiration for today's television landscape. There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to help consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

The Commission has a statutory obligation under Section 629 of the Communications Act to assure the commercial availability of navigation devices to consumers from sources other than their traditional video programming providers, like cable, satellite, or telecommunications providers. Section 629 of the Communications Act is explicit: "The Commission shall... adopt regulations to assure the commercial availability, to consumers of multichannel video programming... of converter boxes, interactive communications equipment, and other equipment... from manufacturers, retailers, and other vendors not affiliated with any multichannel video program distributor [emphasis added]." The Act further provides that such alternatives must be secure. The issue before the Commission is how to obey Section 629 in a world of evolving technology. A monopoly-provided set top box would appear to be the opposite of the choice inherent in an "app TV" future and contrary to the statutory mandate.

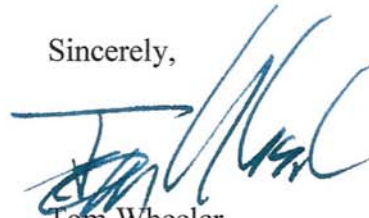
I understand there has been some misinformation that the Commission is currently considering the so called "All-Vid" approach to meeting our obligations under Section 629. I understand your concerns around this approach and can assure you that All-Vid, a 2010 proposal that consumers obtain a separate, additional device in order to access video programming, is not under consideration by the Commission. Technology has moved rapidly forward since 2010 and any Commission proposals will reflect the technological advances and capabilities by manufacturers and innovators.

I also share your goals that public safety and access to minority programming not be adversely affected. Any alternatives the Commission considers will include the critical capabilities to receive emergency alerts, protect privacy and abide by copyright rules. Further,

competition in interfaces, search functions, and integration of programming sources can lead customers to have greater ability to access minority and special interest programming. This is about rising increased access and choice to the top of the pile, not the bottom.

As we continue to explore fulfilling the statutory mandate I look forward to continuing to work with you. I can assure you that we are in complete agreement about reducing consumer costs, lowering energy consumption, encouraging innovative programming, and protecting privacy, public safety and children.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 15, 2016

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop
U.S. House of Representatives
2429 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bishop:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern with issues relating to Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your admiration for today's television landscape. There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to help consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

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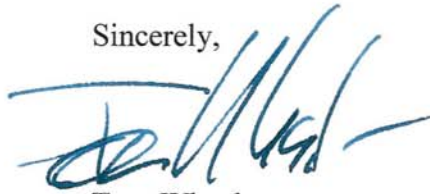
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As we continue to explore fulfilling the statutory mandate I look forward to continuing to work with you. I can assure you that we are in complete agreement about reducing consumer costs, lowering energy consumption, encouraging innovative programming, and protecting privacy, public safety and children.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 15, 2016

The Honorable Corrine Brown
U.S. House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Brown:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern with issues relating to Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your admiration for today's television landscape. There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to help consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

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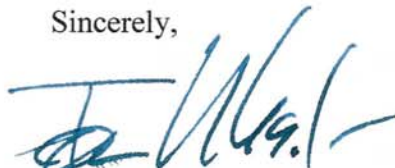
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 15, 2016

The Honorable G.K. Butterfield
U.S. House of Representatives
2305 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern with issues relating to Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your admiration for today's television landscape. There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to help consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 15, 2016

The Honorable Yvette D. Clarke
U.S. House of Representatives
2351 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Clarke:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern with issues relating to Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your admiration for today's television landscape. There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to help consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 15, 2016

The Honorable William Lacy Clay
U.S. House of Representatives
2418 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Clay:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern with issues relating to Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your admiration for today's television landscape. There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to help consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

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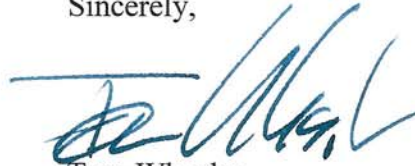
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Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 15, 2016

The Honorable John Conyers
U.S. House of Representatives
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Conyers:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern with issues relating to Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your admiration for today's television landscape. There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to help consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

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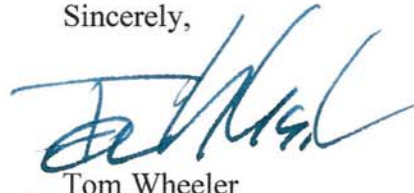
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 15, 2016

The Honorable Danny K. Davis
U.S. House of Representatives
2159 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Davis:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern with issues relating to Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your admiration for today's television landscape. There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to help consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

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